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# THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1859.

## F. SILCHER'S SUCCINCT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF SINGING SCHOOLS AND CHORAL SOCIETIES.\*

*Translated from the German by SABILLA NOVELLO.*

**PREFACE.**—It is an undeniable fact, that voluminous treatises on vocal instruction can seldom or never be used in schools for the people; and therefore, notwithstanding their intrinsic merit, cannot accomplish their object: of this, the author has been perfectly convinced, by many years' experience and observation, and therefore feels certain that a book of instruction, written in a very succinct but comprehensive form, would be a valuable and much-needed guide,—not only for singing schools, but also for those instructors who might wish to improve and perfect choral societies. With this view, he publishes the present work, which contains nothing that does not belong to the subject it treats of; hoping to fulfil a useful duty, and merit gratitude, especially at the present time, when choral singing is cultivated on every hand.

This guide will contain no diffuse exercises on rhythm in quadruple quavers or twelve quaver bars; no erudite discussions on the human voice, on tonal dynamics, different clefs, various terms of art, or diminished and augmented intervals; no laborious reckonings of major and minor, whole and semitones; no explanations of scales never used in popular song, for instance, A $\sharp$  minor, D $\flat$  major and minor, B $\flat$  minor, E $\flat$  minor, G $\flat$  or F $\sharp$  major and minor.

The present guide will endeavour to clearly define the natural construction and treatment of scales, with their intervals; the keys and measures commonly used for popular song; furthermore, it will give illustrative examples and short instructions on accentuation of tones, and pure enunciation of vowels and syllables; and a precise method with regard to modulations and minor keys.

The author leaves connoisseurs to decide whether he have succeeded in this; and whether, or in what, the present treatise may differ from other works of a similar nature. He will merely remark, that he has found essential benefit in causing scholars, while practising intervals, to name the figures, which help to indicate distance; and also the numerical words—second, third, &c.: and further, when teaching relative minor, even the distinct proportion of two intervals, viz.:—minor and major second, minor and major third. This practice sharpens and cultivates the ear, gives

little trouble to the scholar, and enables him to clearly perceive the relation of minor and major keys (see Nos. 103, 105, and 113).

With respect to rhythm, as treated in books of instruction published since the last 25 years, the author is of opinion that it is a bad method—first to plague pupils with a number of mere rhythmic exercises in all measures—and afterwards, when they have perchance forgotten these, to add melodies.

In the present guide, rhythmic exercises will be given (see Nos. 50 to 60, and Nos. 80 to 100), immediately afterwards joined not only to a melody, but with added appropriate text; thus, as is natural, and has been proved by experience, interest is soonest excited and maintained among the pupils.

May this little book tend to forward the good and beautiful object of choral song, and serve as an aid to instructors in their labors; may it conduce to render youth, and even infancy, acquainted with music, and thus excite and ennoble the love of national song, in and out of school! With this hearty wish, it is recommended to all lovers of song, by  
THE AUTHOR.

### PLAN FOR A COURSE OF SINGING.

*Six and seven years old.*—Cultivate the ear and perception of time by little diatonic songs, which may be sung by ear. For this purpose, "Silcher's 48 melodies for the young"† would be found useful. The first four Sections of this work may also be practised.

*Eight and nine years old.*—Succinct instruction book, from Section 1 to Section 8. Simultaneously with Sections 7 and 8, may be sung songs for children in one or two parts, of easy rhythm, in C major, in any measure commonly used for popular music; and also chorales in  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{2}$ , and  $\frac{3}{2}$  measure, when not containing many modulations;—which must, at this period, be sung by ear. Instruction on modulation will be ultimately easier, when the ear has been already prepared for it.

*Ten and eleven years old.*—Section 9 to 15. After Section 10, songs in C major, interspersed with notes of different value and with semitones, may be sung; and simultaneously with Sections 11 to 15, songs and chorales in all sharp major keys, with modulations, may be practised.

*Twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years old.*—Sections 16 to 28. With Sections 16 to 23, songs and chorales in usual flat major keys, with modulations, may be used; and with Sections 24 to 28, songs and chorales in the *minor*,—and then may follow miscellaneous part-songs, with passages, &c., in the commonest major and minor keys.

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† Fifth Thousand. For Schools and Singing Classes. *Silcher's Melodies for Youth*, arranged by F. L. Soper. Price 1s. 6d., paper covers; 2s. 6d., cloth. Also in 10 parts, each 1s. per packet of 13 copies. London: J. A. Novello, and Simpkin and Co.